



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Public Affairs Office
2400 Wright Street
Madison, WI 53704

Contact: Lt. Col. Tim Donovan
608-242-3050
Cell: 608-516-1777

March 22, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Members of Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion expected home Thursday, Friday, Sunday

More than one full year after they were ordered to active duty, members of the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 724th Engineer Battalion who deployed to Iraq last May are scheduled to begin returning to Wisconsin this week. About 250 soldiers from the Hayward-based engineer unit are expected back in Wisconsin Thursday, Friday and Sunday [March 25, 26 and 28]. The remaining 250 members of the battalion are also expected home soon, but there are no flights scheduled for them at this time.

The 724th Engineer Battalion was mobilized March 15, 2003, and deployed to Southwest Asia May 8. Members of the unit served at a base in central Iraq, where they provided engineer support to coalition forces and also helped rebuild Iraqi infrastructure, including rehabilitating schools.

Soldiers from the battalion's Company B (Spooner and Superior) are scheduled to arrive at Volk Field aboard two military aircraft Thursday morning. Each flight will have about 70 passengers, the first should arrive shortly after 7:00 a.m. and the other at about 8:30 a.m. Company C soldiers (Rhineland and Tomahawk) will be returning on three separate flights, with about 10 soldiers among the passengers on Thursday morning's 8:30 a.m. arrival. Another 70 soldiers will return Friday morning about 5:30 a.m., and the company's final 30 soldiers are scheduled to land Sunday morning at about 8:30 a.m.

- more -

Guard engineers returning

Page 2

Soldiers will be met by senior National Guard officials, a military band and as many as 750 family members and friends. Following an initial reunion with their families and a brief official “welcome home,” the soldiers will travel to nearby Fort McCoy to begin about five days of demobilization processing.

Not all the battalion’s deployed soldiers have scheduled return times. Members of the 724th’s Headquarters and Headquarters Company (Hayward and Superior) and Company A (Medford and Chippewa Falls) do not have flights scheduled yet, but their overseas missions are also complete and Guard officials expect them to be back in Wisconsin as soon as military airlift is available for their return flights. One other Wisconsin Guard Engineer unit has also completed its mission in Iraq and is expected back in Wisconsin soon, but the 229th Engineer Company of Prairie du Chien and Platteville does not have return transportation scheduled yet.

Following this week’s return of 250 members of the 724th Engineer Battalion, the Wisconsin Guard will still have about 1,230 soldiers and airmen on active duty. Of those, 765 are deployed overseas.

#

Note to Editors and News Directors: News media are welcome to cover the return of the 724th Engineer Battalion aboard four separate military aircraft: two on Thursday, and one each on Friday and Sunday.

Following each aircraft’s arrival, soldiers and their families will have about an hour together before the soldiers are bused to Fort McCoy to begin demobilization processing. It is not yet known exactly when they will return to their hometown armories before being released from active duty.

News media organizations wishing to cover the Volk Field arrival should call Tim Donovan (608-242-3050 or Cell 608-516-1777) so arrangements can be made for access to the military installation.

AIRCRAFT ARRIVAL TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL FOR UPDATES.

CALL 608-516-1777 FOR LIVE UPDATES.

A RECORDED UPDATE IS AVAILABLE AT 608-242-3059.